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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICE'S INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH U/SYG  
LYNN PASCOE

Classified By: Ambassador Susan Rice for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. U/SYG for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe told Ambassador Rice during a February 23 introductory meeting, that he was trying to change the culture of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) from one of "writing talking points for internal meetings" to solving problems through good-offices missions and mediation. In order to accomplish this, he had recently increased the number of DPA staff, was sending people out of New York and into trouble spots, and was building a stand-by mediation support group that could add knowledge of regional issues to UN mediation efforts. Pascoe said his department would have to continue to rely on extra-budgetary sources to accomplish its mission. The U/SYG reviewed some of DPA's current mediation efforts, saying he thought DPA had "a real shot" at getting a Cyprus settlement, was trying to get "something on the ground to stabilize Mogadishu," and was pressing Mugabe to build a "working government" in Zimbabwe. Ambassador Rice encouraged U/SYG Pascoe to develop the ability to identify troublespots before a crisis erupts. She also questioned whether sending Mugabe a lifeline in Zimbabwe is counterproductive. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Undersecretary-General (U/SYG) for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe briefed Ambassador Rice on February 23 on his priorities for the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). His top priority, he said, is to transform DPA into an organization that can solve problems through mediation and good-offices missions. In order to do this, he said, he is trying to get his staff out of New York and into the trouble spots. He is also trying to build up the Stand-by Team of Mediation Experts, a group which will be able to mobilize expertise on specific conflict-resolution issues quickly to assist DPA in resolving conflicts. He said experts from the team have assisted in African Union peace talks in Kenya, and that he had recently dispatched an expert to assist Special Envoy Alexander Downer in the Cyprus talks.

13. (C) Pascoe said he needed to change the culture of DPA, which has been focused on "writing talking points for internal meetings." He also believed that the country-level knowledge of his staff was not as deep and broad as it needs to be. He said many of the current DPA staff had come from the former Soviet Union, Europe or North America, but he said he spends 70% of his time dealing with Africa and the Middle East. He had been able to bring in 50 new staff at the beginning of the year, many of them at junior levels, which would allow him to build the necessary new expertise from the bottom up. Ambassador Rice suggested it was also important for DPA to better identify troublespots before a crisis erupts. Pascoe acknowledged that it was important to develop an early warning system, but added that it is difficult to predict which potential troublespots might erupt, and which will not.

14. (C) Despite the increased budget that allowed him to hire additional staff, the U/SYG said he still would need to rely on extra-budgetary funding from 1/2 to 2/3 of his operations. As an example, he said this year's budget contained only 1/3

of the travel money he knew he would need. The "curse of DPA," he said, is that it is funded from the regular budget (as opposed to DPKO peacekeeping missions, which are funded from peacekeeping assessments), and he would have to look at innovative funding mechanisms to accomplish his priorities. One idea might be to establish regional offices that would be able to address several regional issues from one office, and cited Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus as two places where this approach might work.

15. (C) Turning to some of the specific issues on DPA's plate, Pascoe said he was pleased with SRSG de Mistura's work with elections in Iraq. He also thought SRSG Ian Martin's work on the Nepal peace process had been successful, and DPA had been able to utilize a combination of mediation and support for elections there. Pascoe believed there was "a real shot" at getting an agreement in Cyprus. In Somalia he said he had pushed to get SRSG Ould-Abdallah out to Mogadishu to try and get a broader coalition of support for stabilizing the country. He thought there was a chance for success, albeit a small one, and believed it mattered less whether the UN establish a peacekeeping mission or a political mission, as long as something was on the ground to help stabilize Mogadishu, which could then be built upon.

16. (C) Pascoe was less optimistic about Zimbabwe, where he said he was at a loss as to how to achieve the dual goals of helping the people of Zimbabwe and trying to put together a working government. The Secretary-General had pushed Mugabe hard, but Mugabe was blocking progress. Ambassador Rice questioned whether by trying to facilitate a compromise on the government, the UN might be giving Mugabe a lifeline that he might not otherwise have. The U/SYG also said he was

concerned about West Africa, which was becoming a haven for the drug trade between South America and Europe. In Sierra Leone, he was still not certain that the peacebuilding effort was coherent, though he believed SRSG Von der Schulenberg was very bright. He said he did not think that a minimal peacekeeping force, which he characterized as "DPKO lite", was the answer, but more attention was needed to the complexities of putting together a country that is in pieces."  
Rice